

BIBLE CLASS 02.11.2023 REVELATION 1:1-3 THE TESTIMONY OF JESUS CHRIST

Revelation 1:1 The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave unto him, to shew unto his servants things which must shortly come to pass; and he sent and signified *it* by his angel unto his servant John: ² who bare record of the word of God, and of the testimony of Jesus Christ, and of all things that he saw. ³ Blessed *is* he that reads and they that hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written therein: for the time *is* at hand. (Rev 1:1-3 KJV)

Revelation 1:1 Hizi ni habari za mambo ambayo yalifunuliwa na Yesu Kristo. Mungu alimpa Kristo ufunuo huu ili awaonyeshe watumishi wake mambo ambayoyanapaswa kutukia karibuni. Kristo alimtuma malaika wake amjulishe Yohane, mtumishi wake, mambo hayo, ² naye Yohane, ameyasema yote aliyoyaona. Na hii ndio taarifa yake kuhusu ujumbe wa Mungu na ukweli uliofunuliwa na Yesu Kristo. ³ Heri yake mtu anayesoma kitabu hiki; heri yao wale wanaosikiliza maneno ya ujumbe huu wa kinabii na kushika yaliyoandikwa humu, maanawakati umekaribia ambapo mambo haya yatatukia.

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

When we read the last book of the Bible we see how the Lord Jesus Christ regarded this book. He does not speak directly in the opening sentences, but he has said regarding his apostles of whom John, the writer of this book, was one, "He that hears you hears me, hears me" and "he that despises you despises me and he that despises me despises Him that sent me". Consequently we are hearing Christ speak when we hear John describe the book as a revelation sent from Christ. We hear the Lord Jesus speak in the third verse when he says, "I Jesus have sent my angel to testify these things to the ecclesias".

The Lord Jesus taught that "Strait *is* the gate, and narrow *is* the way, which leads unto life, and few there are that find it. (Mat 7:14) The Book of the Revelation of Jesus Christ informs the reader that its contents were sent and signified to his servant John by his angel (Rev 1:1) and this work was sent not to the world at large, but to his friends. Of whom Jesus says "You are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you". (Joh 15:14) It is also important to know that the contents of this **book** were **sent**, the verb here in the Greek is 'semaino' to signify, to use sign language, to use representative language. An example of this is found in chapter one. "The seven stars are the angels (or messengers) of the seven Ecclesias: and the seven candlesticks which you saw, are (represent) the seven Ecclesias." (Rev 1:20-1). This system is also used in the books of Moses, where the Tabernacle and its furniture are full of spiritual meaning.

The importance of a correct understanding of the things contained in the last book of the Bible, should not be underestimated, for the Lord Jesus himself sent his angel to his servant John in order that the servants of Jesus Christ should be made aware of certain things which were to begin to take place very soon while John was still alive. The phrase 'the Revelation of Jesus Christ' should be regarded as the **title of the whole work**. That is from the time of John to the establishment of "a new heaven and a new earth". (Rev.21:1) With this in mind, the promised blessing is to be given to those **who read it** and those **that hear** the words of the prophecy, for the time is at hand. The word for 'to read' in the original Greek means 'to know accurately', while the word 'to keep' means 'to observe narrowly' or 'closely' indicating a need for precision in determining what the symbols actually mean. It gives no room for uncertainty or arbitrary opinion.

In the days of the apostle John, not all those who became Christians could read, but more than reading and hearing was necessary, the essential thing having heard or read was to **KEEP the words** of the prophecy. Putting the instruction given in the prophecy, into practice in daily life was essential, regardless of the setbacks that might arise as a consequence of such obedience. It is therefore essential that an understanding must first be obtained in the same way, that the gospel of Jesus Christ has to be understood before a person can be baptized into the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. When the Ethiopian Eunuch, who evidently believed in the God of Israel because he went to Jerusalem to worship, on his journey home he was reading aloud (so he evidently knew Hebrew or Greek) and he struggled to understand the book of Isaiah. Philip a disciple of Jesus heard him reading and asked him if he understood what he was reading. The Ethiopian replied, "How can I except some man should guide me" and he invited Philip to sit beside him in his chariot. Then Philip, beginning at the same scripture, (Isaiah 53), preached unto him Jesus. After some intensive discussion about the first principles of the oracles of God (Heb.5:12) as they were passing a certain water the Ethiopian enquired of Philip "see here is water what is hindering me to be baptized" Philip said if you believe with all your heart you may, he replied, "I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God." So he commanded the chariot to stand still: and they went down both into the water, both Philip and the eunuch; and he baptized him. (Act 8:37-38)

Now fifty of more years later the apostle John was in the island called Patmos, a Roman slave colony, he was confined there because of his testimony concerning Jesus Christ. It was here that the apostle John was given the task of

showing to the servants of the Lord Jesus, things which must shortly come to pass.

Now if those things had not come to pass but where yet to happen, they are not part of the gospel message that is essential to understand **before** a person can be baptized. The things concerning the Kingdom of God and the Name of Jesus Christ were all things received and understood and put into practice **before** the Revelation of Jesus Christ was made known. Now the apostle Peter laid down an essential guide for understanding scripture and this is particularly referring to the understanding of prophecy, “We have also a more sure word of prophecy; whereunto you do well that you take heed, as to a light that shines in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day star arise in your hearts: Knowing this first, that **no prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation**. For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spoke *as they were* moved by the Holy Spirit.” (2Pe 1:19-21)

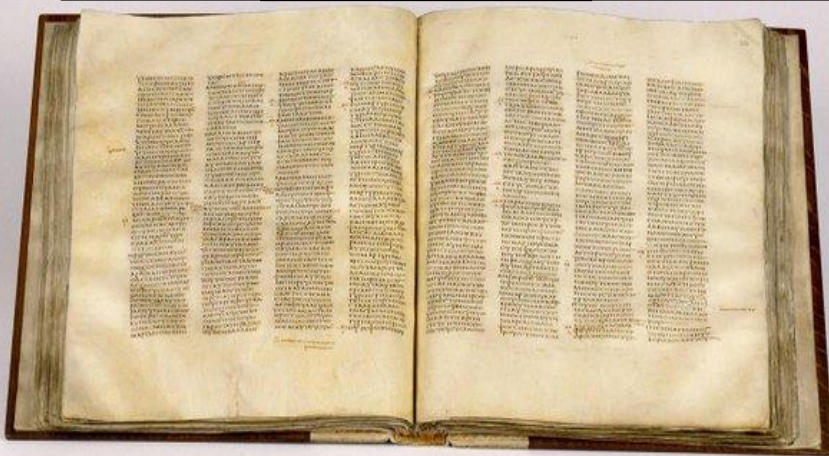
It is self-evident that the Revelation of Jesus Christ was written down in book form on papyrus or parchment, and it will be noticed when reading the

Revelation the word ‘book’ is mentioned 24 times. It is also evident in New Testament times, books either in the form of scrolls or in Codex form where the scrolls were cut to form pages, then stitched together to create book form. This method became frequently used by evangelists such as Timothy (2Tim4:5) to spread the gospel by preaching.

The blessing that the Book of Revelation contains is shown clearly in the second and third chapters to be associated with the attainment of eternal life.

This is made evident in the instruction given to John by

CODEX SINAITICAS



“one like the Son of Man” (2- 13) to write communications to the elders of the seven ecclesia in Asiaa country now located in western Turkey (see map). Each Ecclesia had a letter and these are recorded in the second and third chapters of the book.

He that has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the ecclesias; To him that overcomes will I give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God. (Rev 2:7)

He that has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the ecclesias; He that overcomes shall not be hurt of the second death. (Rev 2:11)

He that has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says unto the ecclesias; To him that overcomes will I give to eat of the hidden manna, and will give him a white stone, and in the stone a new name written, which no man knows saving he that receives *it*. (Rev 2:17)

He that overcomes, and keeps my works unto the end, to him will I give power over the nations: And he shall rule them with a rod of iron; as the vessels of a potter shall they be broken to shivers: even as I received of my Father.

And I will give him the morning star. He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the ecclesias. (Rev 2:26-29)

He that overcomes, the same shall be clothed in white raiment; and I will not blot out his name out of the book of life, but I will confess his name before my Father, and before his angels. (Rev 3:5)

Behold, I come quickly: hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take thy crown. Him that overcomes will I make a pillar in the temple of my God, and he shall go no more out: and I will write upon him the name of my God, and the name of the city of my God, *which is* new Jerusalem, which cometh down out of heaven from my God: and *I will write upon him* my new name. He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says unto the churches. (Rev 3:11-13)

To him that overcomes will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne. He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says unto the churches. (Rev 3:21-22 KJV)

Now with the apostle John in Patmos, and in all probability he was the last of the apostles, and the ecclesias in Asia were being corrupted largely by outside influences, God gave a revelation to His Son to show the Lord Jesus Christ the account of the things which would occur to those of his followers who



- though succeeding ages would remain faithful to his teaching and their love for Him. This can be seen in John's vision of the Lord Jesus as a priest upon his throne (see Zech.6:16) with a book written within and on the backside sealed with seven

seals which no man in heaven (the ruling classes) nor on the earth, (the working classes) nor under the earth (the slaves) was found worthy to open. For this the apostle John wept greatly until He saw the Lord Jesus, as a "lamb" coming to take the book from the right hand of him that sat upon the throne. AS he did so the four living ones and the four and twenty elders with their golden vials representing the prayers of all the saints. The book was sealed with seven seals, and only the Lamb of God representing the Lord Jesus Christ had received from his Father the power to open the seals, as the apostle Peter confirms in his first letter when speaking of Noah's experience he writes, "in the days of Noah, while the ark was a preparing, wherein few, that is, eight souls were saved by water. The like figure whereunto *even* baptism does also now save us (not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God,) by the resurrection of Jesus Christ: **Who is gone into heaven, and is on the right hand of God; angels and authorities and powers being made subject unto him. (1Pe 3:20-22)** Consequently it is the Lamb of God, the Lord Jesus who opens not only the seven Seals, but also controls the seven Trumpets, and the seven Golden Vials (Rev 15:7)

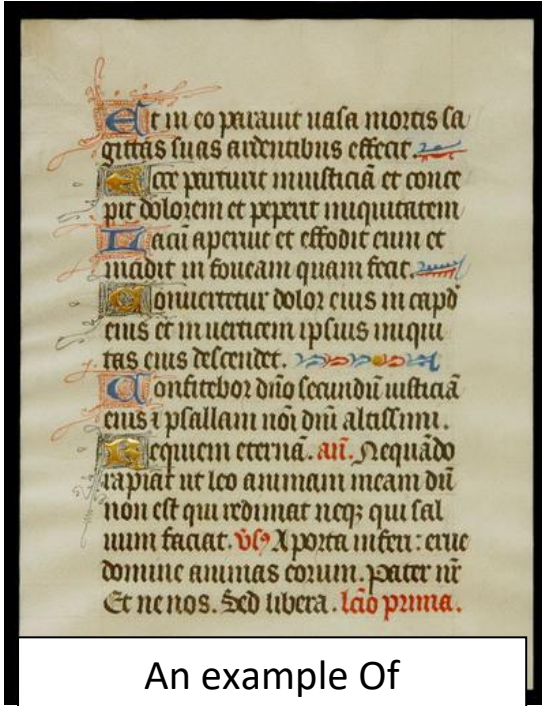
Now the fact that the words and activities of Jesus and his Apostles have been recorded are for the benefit of the called, chosen and faithful. (Rev 17:14) That they may be aware of the things that faithful men and women have had to endure in the past, in some cases being prepared to lay down their lives for the Truth's sake. They have been called by the gospel message of the things concerning the kingdom of God, and the name of Jesus Christ (Act 8:12) They have been chosen by their acceptance of the truth as it is in Jesus, turning them from darkness to light, and *from* the power of the adversary, unto God, and

have been baptized that they may receive forgiveness of sins, (Act 26:18) and receive an inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith that is in the Lord Jesus Christ. The Book of Revelation or the Apocalypse provides them with a light to their path, it informs them of the past history of the true followers of Christ, it informs them where they are in their present situation, and it informs them of the next things that are to occur, in relation to the return from heaven of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. Delving into the past fulfilment of prophecy helps us to understand that Yahweh is a God of truth and without iniquity, he is just and right. (Deut. 32:4). So that no matter what trials we are called upon to experience we can put our trust in him.

So from the time that the last of the apostles fell asleep we have had a more sure word of Prophecy; to which we do well that we take heed, as unto a light that shines in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day star arise in your hearts. For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spoke *as they were* moved by the Holy Ghost. (2Pe 1:19-21)

The word 'book' has been alluded to as appearing some 24 times in the Revelation. One aspect of Daniel's prophecy is that he was instructed to, shut up the words, and seal the book, until the time of the end: *when* many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall be increased. (Dan 12:4) For the most part the word of God was restricted to the Jewish people who remained faithful to their calling. Not until the reign of King Ptolemy II Philadelphus of Egypt (285-246 BC) was the Old Testament translated into the Greek language and then it could be read by both Jews and Gentiles and their knowledge could increase regarding the God of Israel. However it would seem that not until about the sixth trumpet did the scriptures begin to be available to the nations. So it is significant that the mighty angel of Revelation chapter 10 had in his hand, a little book open: the book was given to John and he was instructed to eat it up. And he was then informed "Thou must prophesy again before many peoples, and nations, and tongues, and kings" (Rev 10:11).

John of course died and we read no more of him but the work he was asked to undertake has enabled the Gospel Message to be understood and accepted by all peoples as Yahweh intended. The angel appears to be *a personification of knowledge and wisdom*; See something in the manner of Solomon, Doth not wisdom cry? And understanding put forth her voice? (Pro 8:1). The Turks, seized Constantinople and overturned the Eastern Roman Empire in A.D. 1453, and continued to "hurt the rest" of the men, those in the west, who under the Papacy repented not of the works of their hands,"



An example Of
Gutenberg's printing

But one remarkable event in the west needs to be noticed and that is that by A.D. 1455 Johannes Gutenberg had perfected the first Printing Press and produced a 42 line Bible using moveable type.

Since the invention of printing, in the middle of the fifteenth century, and the consequent cheapness and wide circulation of books, the progress of knowledge has been irresistible and rapid; so that, in our day, it has made more progress than in all the preceding 1500 years since John was favored with these visions in the Isle of Patmos. The Book has been opened. **The Bible has become the**

greatest selling book ever published among all nations. It has not caused all nations to

beat their swords into plough shares, but it has obliged persecutors to reduce their cruelties. But more than this for "the light shines in darkness; and the darkness comprehended it not". (Joh 1:5) and the majority of people do not want the light because this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men love darkness rather than light, because their deeds are evil. (See John 3:19)

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